

REMARKS

The Office Action dated January 25, 2006 has been received and carefully studied.

Applicants affirm their election to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-6. By the accompanying amendment, claims 7-18 have been cancelled without prejudice to filing divisional applications with respect thereto.

The Examiner rejects claims 1-3 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-18 of U.S. Patent No. 6,635,201, and claims 1-3 and 6 as being unpatentable over claims 1-12 of U.S. Patent No. 6,830,717.

By the accompanying amendment, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the first and second openings in the housing are in fluid communication with each other. Support for the amendment can be found in Figures 1 and 2 in the paragraph bridging pages 8 and 9, where it is disclosed that quenching begins from both the top and bottom of each well of the plate 10 when the plate 10 is submerged in the quenching bath. No claim of either the '201 or '717 patent discloses or suggests that the quenching bath enters each of the openings (e.g., the top and bottom of a well) to precipitate the polymer in the housing, as now claimed.

The Examiner rejects claims 1-4 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being unpatentable over Kopaciewicz, U.S. Patent No. 6,048,457, and claim 5 as being unpatentable of Kopaciewicz in view of Wheeler, U.S. Publication No. 2003/01920260. The Examiner notes in particular Example 9, where equal pressure is maintained in a pipette while the polymeric matrix is formed, therefore meeting the isobaric limitation.

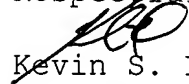
The Example cited by the Examiner maintains equal pressure in a pipette tip after the casting solution was added through one end of the tip. In contrast, instant claim 1 requires that the quenching bath enter each opening in the housing, wherein each of the openings is in fluid communication with the other. Kopaciewicz '457 does not disclose or suggest this step. Indeed, Example 9 of the '457 reference draws a casting solution into only one end of a glass pipette, which is subsequently exposed to a methylene chloride bath.

Wheeler et al. do not supply the deficiencies of Kopaciewicz.

New claims have been added to further define the invention.

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing.

Respectfully submitted,



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